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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Ms. June Teisan, 2007–2008 Michigan Teacher of the Year
SUBJECT: Teacher of the Year Report

In the Classroom

As the first semester comes to a close, our studies of biology and cytology wind down and we move from microscopes to telescopes to explore the wonders of astronomy. However, we never leave behind what was learned in previous lessons: building on prior knowledge of botany and biology, science students will participate in a NASA design challenge asking them to build lunar growth chambers for basil seeds that were flown to space this past fall! More details about this exciting activity are available at <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/plantgrowth/home/index.html>.

Cross-curricular connections linking science and math will be enriched this year with the RocketMath! Program. February will find our early adolescent learners constructing straw rockets with clay nose cones that will fly high from a pneumatic launch apparatus set at varying angles to investigate the interplay between design, trajectory, distance, speed, etc. Our eighth grade mentors from Algebra class have already completed this unit of study and will rotate into the seventh grade classes to serve as peer coaches -- which deepens their understanding as well!

On the Road

Since the announcement of the finalists for the National Teacher of the Year, I've been thrilled to participate in numerous newspaper and radio interviews, and my calendar of speaking engagements is spilling over into April and May. I have received encouraging letters and emails from community members, fellow teachers from across the state, and even a former babysitter of mine! Best of all, someone who is acquainted with my childhood 8th grade science teacher - who was instrumental in cultivating my love of science - wrote me a letter providing contact information so I can get in touch!

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